

# OUR stories

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## **Each child is unique.**

A great classroom I used to visit regularly had a teacher who believed, understood and honored that each child is unique. The children come in each morning, and settle in free choice centers first thing.

After a while, the teacher usually goes to the reading center and lets a child choose a book for her to read. (Of course the teacher put the books there for the children to choose.) She begins reading, and most of the children put down what they were doing and come join the group in the reading corner to hear the story.

But one little boy is working in the block corner and he stays there, and two children are at the puzzle table, and they stay there. Now, they have a clear understanding that when this happens they need to work quietly enough for the other children to hear, and the assistant keeps an eye on those children.

As the teacher is reading, she stops every so often and asks a question. And WHO, before any other child can even draw breath to, answers every question – correctly? The little boy in the block corner does. He listens best when occupied in doing something.

If we made that little boy come to the rug, he'd be distracting 4 or 5 other children around him, and he would not be paying attention as well, because he CAN'T pay attention well with the distraction of all the other children around him. It's not that he won't; it's that he can't.

Expect children to be different. Honor those differences. *Foundations* includes "standards" for what children should be learning. However, the way in which each child develops will vary greatly, because each child is unique.